

HOUSE BILL 6

By Bone

AN ACT to name a segment of U.S. Highway 231 in Wilson County in honor of the late Sergeant Claude R. Walls.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who made great sacrifices in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no soldier is more deserving of this honor than the late Sergeant Claude R. Walls, formerly of the United States Army; and

WHEREAS a longtime resident of Lebanon, Tennessee, the late Sergeant Claude R. Walls is the most decorated veteran in Wilson County history, having courageously served his country as a soldier in the United States Army during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, like thousands of others of this nation's sons and daughters, Claude R. Walls did not shrink from serving in Korea, believing in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and liberty against the aggression of Communism; and

WHEREAS, while engaged in battle in Korea, Sergeant Walls truly evidenced the virtues of valor and sacrifice by protecting and defending his platoon; on this occasion, he and one other comrade voluntarily held back enemy forces by themselves, thus enabling their platoon to establish a successful defensive action; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Walls then rendered immediate aid to his fallen comrade and carried him to safety, while continuing to periodically fire upon the enemy until his ammunition was exhausted; and

WHEREAS, for his heroic actions, Sergeant Walls was honored with a plethora of awards, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Korean War Service Medal, and he was inducted into the Legion of Honor; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Claude R. Walls served with great courage and gallantry, sacrificing his personal well-being for his country and for the cause in which he believed, and for that rare sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the United States Army, he proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier; and

WHEREAS, Claude R. Walls' valiant service in the military and his love of his family, his fellow citizens, and his country, as exemplified in his heroic service in defense of all that he held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, the Lebanon City Council has petitioned this body to name a certain segment of U.S. Highway 231 in Wilson County to permanently commemorate the late Sergeant Claude R. Walls' singular patriotism, courage, and sacrifice as a soldier and his enduring status as Wilson County's most decorated veteran; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly most heartily concurs with this excellent proposal; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the segment of U. S. Highway 231 from the Wilson County - Rutherford County boundary northward to such route's intersection with the City of Lebanon Public Square is hereby designated the "Sergeant Claude R. Walls Memorial Highway" as a lasting tribute to Wilson County's most decorated veteran who served his country courageously and with great personal sacrifice in Korea.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the segment of U. S. Highway 231 described in Section 1 as the "Sergeant Claude R. Walls Memorial Highway". The language "Korean War Hero" shall be included under Sergeant Walls' name on all such signs or markers.

SECTION 3. The erection of such directional signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not

render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.